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## Pueblo Ransom Charge Denied by U.S. Leaders

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A claim that the United States paid ransom to secure the release of the USS Pueblo's crew Dec. 22 by North Korea has been denied by the State Department and on Capitol Hill.

But Sen. Stephen M. Young, D-Ohio, says the man who made the claim, the Rev. Paul D. Lindstrom, national chairman of the Remember the Pueblo Committee, appears to have a Penta-

gon source who is "leaking" him security information.

Young, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, described Lindstrom's alleged source yesterday as "some right winger" and hinted he is trying to learn the official's identity.

He repudiated Lindstrom's claim of a ransom "on the basis of any information I have."

Lindstrom, head of the Independent Conservative Church of Christian Liberty in Prospect Heights, Ill., brought up the ransom charge initially in an interview published Tuesday by the Norfolk Pilot.

In Chicago yesterday, he told the Associated Press his committee received information on Dec. 20 that the Central Intelligence Agency was involved.

He said his sources were unable to tell whether the alleged ransom was paid in dollars or goods, but that they said the United States agreed also to abandon claim to the spy ship.

A CIA spokesman said he had no comment on Lindstrom's claim that it was involved in a ransom.

At the State Department, officials who denied the Pueblo crew ransom claims yesterday said they still are working to have the spy ship returned and may have an announcement shortly.

■ Deep behind the public hearings on the Pueblo seizure a bitter dispute is racking the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency. In testifying that the intelligence officer and 38 enlisted men behind the triple lock "were not working for me," Commander Lloyd Bucher has heated to boiling point the Navy's—and her sister services'—accumulated resentments against the free-wheeling intelligence agencies. CIA Director Richard Helms was panicked into an unprecedented sort of public statement: "Neither the CIA, nor I personally, have had anything to do with the mission of the USS Pueblo, the ship itself or any of her crew." This seemed to finger the NSA, and got the NSA people, also, furious against Helms. Whether Helms was telling the truth or not, he is the Central Intelligence Director with a general responsibility for *all* intelligence operations. Helms is also, it is not forgotten in high places, a Democratic appointee. The rumor runs that he may soon be tossed to the wolves.